**Evolution of a Term**

Truism \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Write one complete sentence to go with each of the boxes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What the word meant to me when I was four | What the word meant to me when I was eight |
| What the word means to me now | What the word will probably mean to me when I am \_\_\_\_ (pick an age) |
| What I have learned |  |

Read your sentences from the beginning. Do they all hang together?

Do you see how this could be the perfect plan for an essay?

Was this hard or easy?

Which section would be the most interesting to explain?

What could be done so not all essays seem to be alike?

**Text Structure: Evolution of a Term**

“So the first step in writing an essay has to be for the writer to chew on the prompt, to read and reread it, to digest it to find the hard-won truth in it, or the paradox in it, or the human struggle within it.” Gretchen Bernabei in *Reviving the Essay*, page 1.

In this lesson you’ll watch students “transform a prompt into something of their own, something true.” You will also observe the students write a kernel essay, an outline which can be developed into a speech.

This lesson was preceded by a study of great speeches and the literary elements included within them. It grows out of a request that the students imitate the substantive mentor text of the great speeches.

**Goal:** find the personal connection in a prompt and write a kernel essay which later can be developed into a whole essay

**Standard (W.CCR.4)** - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Standard (W.CCR.5)** - Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

This lesson is found in ***Reviving the Essay* “Lesson 13: Evolution of a Term”**, pp. 62-67

Following this lesson, the teacher will help students plan out text support which might include details from life, literature, and research. Page 176 lists the steps for completing the essay.

**Support materials for this lesson:**

“Chapter 11: Book Report Essays,” “Chapter 12: Content Areas” and “Chapter 13: Extracting Structures from Great Pieces” Bernabei, Gretchen and Dottie Hall. 2012. *The Story of My Thinking*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

“Truisms with Picture Prompts” pp. 88-93. Bernabei, Gretchen. 2009. *Crunchtime: Lessons to Help Students Blow the Roof Off Writing Tests*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

**Debriefing topics:**

* How to select prompts and supporting pictures
* How to find a text structure, including the examination of mentor text
* Purposes for essay writing
* Audience